

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 169400

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O 180041Z JUL 75

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY CANBERRA IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON

AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY MANILA

AMEMBASSY LONDON

S E C R E T STATE 169400

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PORG, AS, RP, TH

SUBJECT: AUSTRALIAN PROPOSAL TO DISSOLVE SEATO

1. AUSTRALIAN AMBASSADOR SIR PATRICK SHAW CAME TO SEE HABIB ON INSTRUCTIONS TO INFORM US OF HIS GOVERNMENT'S INTENTION TO PROPOSE DISSOLUTION OF SEATO TO THAIS AND FILIPINOS. AUSTRALIANS HAD REACHED THIS DECISION ON BASIS THAT ORGANIZATION OF ONLY MARGINAL USEFULNESS AT BEST. AUSTRALIAN EMBASSIES IN MANILA AND BANGKOK WERE ASKED NOT TO INFORM HOST GOVERNMENTS UNTIL JULY 18 SO THAT DEPARTMENT COULD BE INFORMED FIRST.

2. SHAW SAID THAT THIS INITIATIVE WAS CONSISTENT WITH GENERAL CONVERSATION BETWEEN FOREIGN MINISTER WILLESEE AND ROMULO OF THE PHILIPPINES IN PEKING LAST MONTH AND CONFORMED WITH ROMULO'S VIEWS ABOUT

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 STATE 169400

SEATO.

3. HABIB RESPONDED THAT HIS IMMEDIATE REACTION WAS NEGATIVE TO THE ABANDONNING OF SEATO AT THIS TIME. THERE HAD BEEN ENOUGH SHOCK IN THE AREA FOR THE MOMENT AND WE SHOULD NOT TAKE DISTURBING INITIATIVES. HE SAID THAT ROMULO DID NOT NECESSARILY SPEAK FOR MARCOS ON THIS MATTER AND THAT WE HAD NO INDICATION

FROM EITHER THE PHILIPPINES OR THAILAND THAT THEY WISHED TO SCUTTLE SEATO AT THIS TIME. HE REQUESTED THAT SHAW INFORM CANBERRA OF THIS NEGATIVE INITIAL REACTION AND ASKED THAT NO ACTION BE TAKEN WITH THE THAIS AND FILIPINOS UNTIL THE SECRETARY HAD BEEN CONSULTED AND WE HAD AN OPPORTUNITY TO GIVE A CONSIDERED RESPONSE. SHAW AGREED TO SEND SUCH A MESSAGE.

4. FOR CANBERRA: REQUEST YOUR ADVICE AS TO WHAT LIES BEHIND AUSTRALIAN DECISION AND HASTE IN THIS MATTER. YOU SHOULD SUPPORT OUR REQUEST THAT THEY TAKE NO ACTION UNTIL WE HAVE HAD TIME TO GIVE THEM A CONSIDERED RESPONSE.

5. FOR OTHER ADDRESSEES: WITHOUT CONSULTING HOST GOVERNMENTS OR AUSTRALIAN REPRESENTATIVES, WE WOULD APPRECIATE YOUR VIEWS ON LOCAL ATTITUDE TOWARD AUSTRALIAN PROPOSAL. WE DO NOT WISH TO ANTICIPATE AUSTRALIAN APPROACH ON THEIR PROPOSAL BUT WOULD LIKE TO KNOW WHETHER GOVERNMENTS CONCERNED HAVE TAKEN ANY NEW POSITIONS OR MADE ANY NEW MOVES RE SEATO.

6. FOR LONDON: WE PRESUME THERE IS NO CHANGE IN UK ATTITUDE SINCE WILFORD SPOKE TO HABIB AND SEEMED TO ACCEPT U.S. VIEW THAT IT WAS BEST NOT TO TAKE ANY ACTION RE SEATO AT THIS TIME. KISSINGER

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